

CLAIMS

- 1 1. A system for applying a laser beam to work pieces, comprising:
2 a laser system producing an output beam;
3 target delivery optics arranged to deliver said output beam to a target work piece;
4 a relay telescope having a telescope focal point in a beam path between the laser
5 system and the target delivery optics which relays an image between an image location
6 near an output of the laser system and an image location near said target delivery optics;
7 and
8 a baffle at the telescope focal point.
- 1 2. The system of claim 1, wherein said laser system includes:
2 a gain medium;
3 a polarization rotator;
4 a passive polarizer;
5 a plurality of reflectors configured to define an optical path through the gain
6 medium, the passive polarizer, and the polarization rotator;
7 a phase conjugator configured to receive a beam from the optical path after the
8 pulse has proceeded one or more transits through the optical path, the phase conjugator
9 further configured to return the beam with reversed phase to the optical path to proceed
10 an equal number of transits of the optical path in an opposite direction before exiting the
11 optical path at said passive polarizer; and
12 an intra-cavity relay telescope having a telescope focal point, between the gain
13 medium and the passive polarizer, which is used for relaying images between the gain
14 medium and a location near the output of the laser system.
- 1 3. The system of claim 1, wherein said baffle comprises a pinhole baffle.

- 1 4. The system of claim 1, wherein said baffle comprises a tapered baffle.
- 1 5. The system of claim 1, wherein said relay telescope comprises:
2 a first relay lens;
3 a second relay lens;
4 a vacuum chamber between the first and second relay lenses, the first and
5 second relay lenses focusing beams at the telescope focal point within
6 the vacuum chamber;
7 a mount within the vacuum chamber, adapted to secure the baffle near the
8 telescope focal point;
9 a view port on the vacuum chamber providing a view of the baffle for
10 alignment; and
11 an access port on the vacuum chamber, adapted for insertion and removal of
12 the beam baffle.
- 1 6. The system of claim 1, wherein said output beam comprises pulses having a pulse
2 width of less than 30 nanoseconds and energy greater than 10 joules/pulse on the target
3 work piece.
- 1 7. The system of claim 1, wherein said laser system includes:
2 a gain medium;
3 a polarization rotator;
4 a passive polarizer;
5 a plurality of reflectors configured to define an optical path through the gain
6 medium, the passive polarizer, and the polarization rotator; and
7 a phase conjugator configured to receive a beam from the optical path after the

MICI 1003-2

8 pulse has proceeded one or more transits through the optical path, the phase conjugator
9 further configured to return the beam with reversed phase to the optical path to proceed
10 an equal number of transits of the optical path in an opposite direction before exiting the
11 optical path at said passive polarizer;

12 a first intra-cavity relay telescope having a first intra-cavity telescope focal point,
13 between the gain medium and the passive polarizer, which is used for relaying images
14 between the gain medium and a location near the output of the laser system, including a
15 first intra-cavity baffle near the telescope focal point; and

16 a second intra-cavity relay telescope having a second intra-cavity telescope focal
17 point, between the passive polarizer and the phase conjugator, which is used for relaying
18 images of an output of the gain medium between a location near the passive polarizer and
19 a location at the phase conjugator, including a second intra-cavity baffle near the second
20 intra-cavity telescope focal point.

1 8. A system for laser shock peening work pieces, comprising:

2 a laser system producing an output beam comprising pulses;

3 a work piece robot cell, which positions work pieces to receive the output beam
4 and conditions the work pieces for laser shock peening;

5 target delivery optics arranged to deliver said output beam to a target work piece;

6 a relay telescope having a telescope focal point, in a beam path between the laser
7 system and the target delivery optics, which relays an image between an image location
8 near an output of the laser system and an image location near said target delivery optics;
9 and

10 a baffle at the telescope focal point to block off angle and out of focus back
11 reflections from one or both of the target delivery optics and the work piece robot cell.

MICI 1003-2

1 9. The system of claim 8, wherein said laser system includes:
2 a gain medium;
3 a polarization rotator;
4 a passive polarizer;
5 a plurality of reflectors configured to define an optical path through the gain
6 medium, the passive polarizer, and the polarization rotator; and
7 a phase conjugator configured to receive a beam from the optical path after the
8 pulse has proceeded one or more transits through the optical path, the phase conjugator
9 further configured to return the beam with reversed phase to the optical path to proceed
10 an equal number of transits of the optical path in an opposite direction before exiting the
11 optical path at said passive polarizer; and
12 an intra-cavity relay telescope having a telescope focal point, between the gain
13 medium and the passive polarizer, which is used for relaying images between the gain
14 medium and a location near the output of the laser system.

1 10. The system of claim 8, wherein said baffle comprises a pinhole baffle.

1 11. The system of claim 8, wherein said baffle comprises a tapered baffle.

1 12. The system of claim 8, wherein said relay telescope comprises:
2 a first relay lens;
3 a second relay lens;
4 a vacuum chamber between the first and second relay lenses, the first and
5 second relay lenses focusing beams at the telescope focal point within
6 the vacuum chamber;
7 a mount within the vacuum chamber, adapted to secure the baffle near the
8 telescope focal point;

MICI 1003-2

9 a view port on the vacuum chamber providing a view of the baffle for
10 alignment; and
11 an access port on the vacuum chamber, adapted for insertion and removal of
12 the beam baffle.

1 13. The system of claim 8, wherein said output beam comprises pulses having a pulse
2 width of less than 30 nanoseconds and energy greater than 10 joules/pulse on the target
3 work piece.

1 14. The system of claim 8, wherein said laser system includes:
2 a gain medium;
3 a polarization rotator;
4 a passive polarizer;
5 a plurality of reflectors configured to define an optical path through the gain
6 medium, the passive polarizer, and the polarization rotator; and
7 a phase conjugator configured to receive a beam from the optical path after the
8 pulse has proceeded one or more transits through the optical path, the phase conjugator
9 further configured to return the beam with reversed phase to the optical path to proceed
10 an equal number of transits of the optical path in an opposite direction before exiting the
11 optical path at said passive polarizer;
12 a first intra-cavity relay telescope having a first intra-cavity telescope focal point,
13 between the gain medium and the passive polarizer, which is used for relaying images
14 between the gain medium and a location near the output of the laser system, including a
15 first intra-cavity baffle near the telescope focal point; and
16 a second intra-cavity relay telescope having a second intra-cavity telescope focal
17 point, between the passive polarizer and the phase conjugator, which is used for relaying
18 images of an output of the gain medium between a location near the passive polarizer and

19 a location at the phase conjugator, including a second intra-cavity baffle near the second
20 intra-cavity telescope focal point.

1 15. A method for laser shock peening a target work piece, comprising:
2 coupling a seed pulse into a ring shaped optical path including an amplifying
3 medium;
4 first relaying an image of an output of the amplifying medium to SBS phase
5 conjugation system;
6 phase reversing the pulse in the SBS phase conjugation system after one or more
7 transits through the ring in which the pulse traverses the amplifying medium;
8 second relaying an image of the output of the amplifying medium to an output
9 coupler, after the pulse traverses the amplifying medium in an equal number of transits
10 through the ring in an opposite direction to provide a wavefront corrected output pulse;
11 coupling the wavefront corrected output pulse comprising the image of the output
12 of the amplifying medium out of the ring at the output coupler, and
13 controlling a pulse width of the wavefront corrected output pulse by controlling a
14 threshold of said SBS phase conjugation system;
15 third relaying an image of the wavefront corrected output pulse via a relay
16 telescope to target delivery optics;
17 delivering the wavefront corrected output pulse to the target work piece; and
18 blocking back reflections using a baffle in the relay telescope.

1 16. The method of claim 15, wherein said SBS phase conjugation system comprises a
2 collimated SBS cell and a focused SBS cell in the cavity.

1 17. The method of claim 15, wherein said SBS phase conjugation system comprises a
2 collimated SBS cell and a focused SBS cell in the cavity, and said controlling the pulse

MICI 1003-2

3 width includes diverting a controlled amount of energy from said pulse out of the cavity
4 between the collimated SBS cell and the focused SBS cell to control said threshold.

1 18. The method of claim 15, wherein said SBS phase conjugation system includes an
2 SBS medium in said cavity, the SBS medium comprising a compound having a non-
3 linear index of refraction of less than about 10^{-12} esu.

1 19. The method of claim 15, wherein said SBS phase conjugation system includes an
2 SBS medium in said cavity, and including filtering said SBS medium *in situ* to remove
3 particles having a size greater than about 0.1 microns.

1 20. The method of claim 15, wherein said SBS phase conjugation system includes a
2 collimated SBS cell and a focused SBS cell in the cavity; and
3 aligning the optical cavity using an alignment fiducial between the collimated
4 SBS cell and the focused SBS cell.

1 21. The method of claim 15, wherein said first and second relaying includes using at
2 least one relay telescope having an intra-cavity telescope focal point, having a baffle at
3 said intra-cavity telescope focal point to block off angle beams.